



**Department of Education**  
**Department of Job and Family Services**

**DATE:** April 4, 2016

**TO:** Early Childhood Education and Child Care Providers

**FROM:** The Ohio Department of Education, Wendy Groves  
The Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services, Kara Bertke Wentz

**SUBJECT:** Ohio's Review of Step Up to Quality

The Ohio Departments of Education and the Ohio Department Job and Family Services, are beginning a 10-month validation study of Ohio's five-tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System, Step Up to Quality. The goals of the validation study are to assess (a) the extent to which Ohio's five star rating system captures meaningful differences in quality and (b) the extent to which differences in quality are meaningful for child development and school readiness. Some of the study features include:

- External research and evaluation firms, Compass Evaluation and Research, in partnership with Westat, Inc., are contracted to conduct the study. Active data collection will occur over the next 7-8 months (April through October 2016).
- The study design calls for approximately 80 licensed and regulated child care facilities, including centers, Type A and B homes, and sites with Prekindergarten classrooms. Sites will be randomly selected for participation.
- If selected, a number of assessments will be done of the provider's site and classroom(s). Additionally, children enrolled at each selected site will be invited to participate in child-level assessments of pre-literacy and language skills.
- Trained data collectors will work with selected sites to conduct observations and child-level assessments at times that are convenient to sites.
- Data already "in house" at the Ohio Department of Education and Job and Family Services, from selected and non-selected sites, will be incorporated into the study. **It is important to know that all data will be treated confidentially. This means that data will be reported in the aggregate; individual sites and site data will not be identified in any reporting.**

We will be in touch with additional information if your site is randomly selected to participate in the study. If you do not receive a communication within the next two weeks, your site was not selected for on-site observation and data collection. However, your feedback is welcome. If you want to provide input on Step Up to Quality, please contact study directors at the below:

**Sarah Heinemeier, PhD**  
**Co-Principal Investigator**  
Compass Evaluation and Research  
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You also can submit feedback anonymously, using the following survey link:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SUTQ>

This effort is supported by funds from Ohio's Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant. We look forward to bringing you the findings from this important study.

If you have any concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to contact:

**Melinda Kowalski**  
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